

## EAST LONGMEADOW FOOD SERVICES MEAL CHARGING POLICY

The East Longmeadow Public School District allows students to charge meals on their school meal accounts because it is important that all students have access to a healthy meal during the school day. Recent studies have conclusively associated proper nourishment with a child's ability to learn. No student will go without a balanced lunch in ELPS. Parents/Guardians must be responsible for payment of school meals that are charged to an individual student's meal account. Each year ELPS Food Services will include school meal account information in a "Welcome Back" letter sent to all families at the start of each school year.

Each student has his/her own food service meal account. A unique identification PIN number is assigned to each child along with a school picture. Students use their school-issued IDs to purchase a lunch on a daily basis. The account assigned to each student utilizes a "debit" system using money each parent or guardian has deposited for their student. **Parents/Guardians are expected to keep their child's lunch account balance in the positive.** Families can set up an account on <https://payschoolscentral.com/>. Through the "PaySchools Central" account, one has the ability to track spending, monitor account balances, set up low balance e-mail alerts, and make online payments. Parents/Guardians do not have to pay for lunches online in order to set up an account on <https://payschoolscentral.com/>. Parents/Guardians may use this site for monitoring only. Deposits may be made to students' meal accounts with a check. Instructions on how to set up an account are located on the District website under "School Lunch".

It is the parents/guardians responsibility to keep their student's lunch account positive. This can be accomplished by utilizing the <https://payschoolscentral.com/> website. ELPS realizes that on occasion, due to unforeseen circumstances or in an emergency, a child may need to charge a meal. **This charging policy is not intended to be a form of invoicing.**

The following points outline the charging of school meals and how student meal accounts operate:

- Parents/Guardians are responsible for keeping positive balances in their child's account
- Parents/Guardians may contact the Food Service Office at any time to request student account activity, make arrangements for payments, or request help with any aspect of their child's account.
- Due to unforeseen circumstances or an emergency, a student may charge one school meal per day even if his/her account balance is in the negative
- Parents/Guardians are expected to repay that debt as soon as possible
- Notices of low balances will be sent home by each school office at regular intervals during the school year
- Students are alerted at the register when account balances are below ten dollars
- Once an account reaches **a negative balance of \$20.00** or more, a letter will be mailed from the Food Service Office requesting payment be made as soon as possible
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for any fees incurred due to returned checks
- Students will be prohibited from charging any a la carte items if their account is in the negative
- Parents/Guardians also may be contacted and asked to bring in a lunch from home for their student if ELPS Food Services receives no response to notices on negative account balances
- All positive account balances will carry over to the next school year
- All negative account balances must be settled before the last day of the given school year
- Graduating seniors must close out their lunch account before their final day of school
- If a student withdraws from ELPS, a written request will be needed to refund money remaining on an account
- Unclaimed funds will become the property of ELPS Food Services

In cases of economic hardship, parents/guardians are encouraged to submit an application to participate in the free/reduced meals program at anytime during the school year. Applications are available on the East Longmeadow District Website (under "School Lunch"), at each school office, and from the ELPS Food Service Office.

School Committee Approved: February 27, 2017